

# An Asexual Life

So, I grew up in a little prefab council house in Surrey, England. These prefabs were better than the tin shacks which, I suppose, some people thought them to be. They may have looked like tin shack bungalows from the outside but they were quite well designed. The kitchen had a copper in which clothes could be boiled. The position of the copper in the kitchen, the airing cupboard in the bathroom and the fireplace in the living room all backed onto each other so that escaping warmth was shared between the three of them. Unfortunately there were only two bedrooms.

My mum and dad had one bedroom and the other bedroom was me (the boy) in one single bed plus two of my sisters sharing the other single bed. The third sister had already grown up and left home. The room was tiny and I hated sharing it with two sisters one of whom was several years older than me and was a stropky teenage rock'n'roll fan. The other was three years younger than me and followed me around with a continual "Wotcha doin'? Can I 'ave a go?" which was very annoying since I was usually reading a book. I used to ride away on my bicycle for miles and miles across the Surrey countryside to escape from the sisters.

As I got older my parents assumed that I would reach puberty and start liking girls. They used to taunt me with questions about girls and ask embarrassing accusations such as, when they thought I had begun to have freckles on my face, whether I had been "rubbing noses" with the freckle faced girl Maureen who lived next door. Whenever I expressed a desire to somehow "get out there" in the world or "find things to do" somewhere in the big wide world my dad would chuckle knowingly and say "Ha ha, what's her name son?"

He was wrong. There wasn't a girl and I hadn't reached puberty. Teachers at school were creepy about it. The man who was supposed to be an English teacher standing in front of the class saying to the boys "Some of the girls are getting very sexy and attractive these days aren't they, eh boys?" - which was an excuse for him to leer at the girls himself while pretending to be giving encouragement to the boys. By the time I was 15 the P.E. teacher was making insulting comments about me being smaller than the other boys, asking whether I was a 13 year old who had wandered in. When I went to summer camp as an A.T.C. cadet all the 15 year old boys had to shower in a communal shower room and I was ridiculed for being the only one there who didn't have pubic hair yet.

1969 was a horrible year. I left school in March because of all the bullying and because of the low educational standard of the school. I started work as an office boy in a Fleet Street newspaper office. My dad went into hospital for a minor operation and died on the morning of April the 1st. Soon after these events we got a letter from the new, London based, council to inform us that we were being forcibly re-housed because the prefabs which had been built after World War Two by Surrey County Council were obsolete and would be demolished by London County Council to make way for blocks of flats.

My dad's beloved gardens were destroyed along with the whole street of prefabs and the farmer's fields behind them. It all became blocks of flats. We were moved north to Morden, the very edge of Surrey, almost into London itself.

I was still working in Fleet Street as I reached my 16th birthday. And then I, at last, went through my overdue puberty!

So, I'd gotten there at long last. It was still 1969. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. The Beatles broke up. The 1970s began.

Fast forward to 1973. I was in Glastonbury in Somerset. I met a girl. Her name was Sandy. I thought I was in love. We went for long walks. We talked about poetry and popular songs. She liked Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell. I was 19 and she was 17. She wanted to have sex and I didn't. Something was wrong and I didn't know what it was. Sandy had lots of boyfriends and flaunted this fact to punish me, to provoke me, to rub my nose in the fact that I wasn't doing what she thought I should. On one occasion we hitched hiked to Bath for a live music gig and, on the way back to Glastonbury, we stayed in a large marquee tent where a lot of other people were also sleeping. Sandy had loud energetic sex with some guy she'd just met.

Trying to get to sleep while that was going on was too much for me. I got up and went of the tent into the rain and the howling wind and wandered across a farmer's field shouting at the sky some nonsense about Jesus being crucified and the pain and blood of Christ and how my life meant nothing by comparison but at least I had been spared the sort of suffering endured by Christ. "That's something to be thankful for!" I shouted at the moon, "Something to be thankful for! Something to be thankful for!" I was in the grip of some kind of melodramatic acting out of my emotional pain and, for some reason, it was not a complete ritual without dragging the life and death of Christ into the maelstrom with me.

After a long wandering process of minor epileptic mind flips and catharsis in the storm, connecting to religious symbols of suffering and martyrdom and staring up at the moon and the dark clouds rolling by, the rain splashing my face, I returned to the marquee tent and lay down. I got a few hours sleep and Sandy never knew what I had just been through.

Our relationship continued. For a time we lived in a squat at Havyatt. I even relented on the no sex thing since Sandy was so keen on it. I misguidedly tried to have sex with her when she wanted me to but, perhaps because there were other people in the room or perhaps because it was just never going to happen, the attempt was a failure.

Naturally I considered the possibility of being gay and I would've been okay with that if it had seemed real, but it didn't. I felt no attraction to men at all.

Strangely Sandy still liked being with me. I suppose she liked the fact that I believed myself to be in love with her and that I gazed into her eyes and talked about religion and magic and poetry. The fact that I listened to her and believed in her no matter how cruel she could be. Eventually there came a time when we were at the Windsor Festival that year and her sexy fun games with other blokes got too much for me. I just wandered off and didn't go back. It was over.

Several months later we were together again and it was another dismal tragedy. Sandy had joined a cult and she persuaded me to join. I spent the next few years being brainwashed by

them. They tried to “cure” me of homosexuality which I didn’t even have. I eventually got away from them.

Once I had de-programmed myself from their ideas, their lies, their insanity, their homophobia, I learned once again to think for myself and to come to terms with my sexuality or lack thereof.

I came to an understanding of myself.

I know that I am asexual with a romantic semi-heterosexual leaning or tendency. I don’t like physical sexuality very much but that can sometimes be in variation. I’m not too bothered one way or the other about gender status.

Freud was wrong to imagine that all human psychology is about the sex drive. Jung was correct in thinking that there are other drives which can be central to a person’s life. Not all life is the same. Not all people are the same. We can be driven by the intellect or by spiritual emotions just as much as other people are driven by physical sensations.

The years went by and I eventually became an old man. I feel lucky that my life is driven by things which I can still do in old age: reading, writing, drawing, painting, creating various forms of art.